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# Job Prospects Mixed for Young Maine People as Summer 1981 Approaches

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Maine Bureau of Employment Security

Maine Division of Manpower Research

Maine Labor Market Information Services

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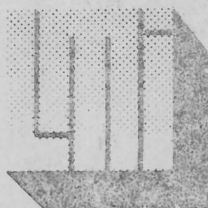
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JOB PROSPECTS MIXED FOR  
YOUNG MAINE PEOPLE AS  
SUMMER 1981 APPROACHES



# Labor Market Information

JUN 17 1981

**BUREAU OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY**  
**MANPOWER RESEARCH DIVISION** 20 UNION ST. AUGUSTA, ME 04330

A BUREAU OF THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF MANPOWER AFFAIRS



## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Technical Services Monograph is the fourth in a series of annual reports concerning the employment outlook for Maine youth. Opportunities available for 1981 graduates of high schools, Vocational-Technical Institutes, and colleges in Maine are considered. In addition, employment opportunities for youth seeking summer jobs are analyzed.

The Manpower Research Division gratefully acknowledges the information provided by the following:

Career Education and Placement Officials with the University of Maine campuses at Orono, Southern Maine, Augusta, Presque Isle, Machias, and Farmington, and at Husson, Bates, Bowdoin, Andover, and Colby Colleges; officials of Northern Maine, Eastern Maine, Central Maine, Southern Maine, and Kennebec Valley Vocational-Technical Institutes; regional vocational center officials; high school guidance directors in all Maine counties; officials from the Maine Department of Community Services, Department of Education (Office of Career Education, Bureau of Vocational Education, and Advisory Council on Vocational Education), Bureau of Public Administration, and State Employment and Training Council; representatives of the Maine Publicity Bureau, Maine Restaurant Association, and Maine Innkeepers Association; and the Maine Job Service's Youth Job Bank officials in Bangor, Portland, and Waterville.

Anyone having any questions or comments regarding the contents of this monograph should contact Rebecca E. Symes, Manpower Research Analyst, at 20 Union Street, Augusta, Maine 04330, or by telephone at 207-289-2271.

Ray A. Fongemie, Director  
Manpower Research Division

May 1981

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A Technical Services Monograph of the Labor Market Evaluation  
and Planning Section, Dana A. Evans, Chief

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## JOB PROSPECTS MIXED FOR YOUNG MAINE PEOPLE AS SUMMER 1981 APPROACHES

The prospects for employment in the summer of 1981 seem quite mixed. Certain young people have skills and abilities which are in demand from employers, while others are finding it extremely difficult to obtain a job. The sluggish economy and resultant high unemployment means that competition is great for most openings.

### UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

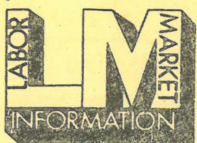
According to a national survey conducted by the College Placement Council, engineering graduates are again in greatest demand by employers, and are commanding top salaries. Chemical and petroleum engineers may be paid as much as \$30,000 per year to start. Computer science and business administration graduates are also in demand, with average salaries offered of \$20,000 and \$17,000, respectively. Liberal arts graduates will be facing greater competition for jobs, with starting salaries averaging \$15,000.

In Maine, most colleges and universities are predicting a difficult job search for many of this year's graduates. On-campus recruitment efforts have generally been similar in total number to last year. However, some employers waited until late in the spring semester before contacting placement offices, perhaps to better understand this year's economic outlook. The University of Maine at Orono reports that the number of employers recruiting on-campus has increased over last year. Many smaller colleges report having a more difficult time this year attracting employers to the campuses to conduct interviews.

Placement rates for graduates are expected to vary greatly among different majors. Graduates from engineering, nursing, and computer science programs are virtually assured of jobs. Demand is also quite high for students who majored in accounting, finance, business administration, secretarial science, data processing and other fields which have a direct application to business. Mathematics, economics, and physical science majors are also in demand.

Education majors may find a change in their job prospects from the past few years. Declining enrollments and budget cuts are leading to fewer teaching positions throughout Maine. However, due to a number of factors, including the stresses of the job and relatively low wages, many teachers are not as likely to remain with their education career as long as was true in the past. In addition, declining college enrollments of education majors have resulted in fewer graduates seeking teaching positions. The higher turnover rate and declining number of education graduates may mean more job opportunities for beginning teachers, even though the total number of teaching positions appears to be declining.

Graduates from general liberal arts or arts and sciences programs will continue to have a difficult time securing a job in their field. Within each field, of course, those students with better grades and a positive work attitude have a better chance of finding a job. Most employers are willing to hire a bright, ambitious graduate regardless of his or her major. The number of college graduates entering graduate school or the military appears to be increasing, possibly because of the lack of employment opportunities. Many graduates may be forced to relocate, both within Maine and out-of-state.





Starting salaries offered to college graduates are, on the average, \$400 to \$500 higher than last year. This increase is typical of the increase evidenced over each of the last five years. Wages offered by Maine firms are estimated to be 15 to 20 percent lower than those offered by out-of-state firms.

### VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL INSTITUTES

The Vocational-Technical Institutes in Maine are currently enjoying an increase in popularity, and with good reason. The placement rates for students graduating from their programs are often reported to be 100 percent. Employers are actively seeking students trained in various trades, as well as health service workers and business graduates. Employers prefer to hire workers who are already trained and need very little on-the-job training. The Vocational-Technical Institutes in Maine have a good reputation for producing skilled workers.

Health service workers are particularly in demand this year. All of the Vocational-Technical Institutes currently report 100 percent placement rates for nursing graduates, as well as excellent rates for medical laboratory technicians, respiratory therapy technicians, and certified nursing assistants.

Graduates from business programs are also enjoying good placement rates. Workers trained in business administration, secretarial science, bookkeeping, keypunch operation, and computer science are greatly in demand, especially if they have some prior work experience in their field.

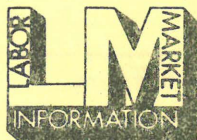
Most trades graduates are also facing strong demand from employers, the exceptions being in the housing construction and automotive trades. Prospects are good for graduates who specialized in heavy equipment technology and repair, electronic and electro-mechanical technology, machine tool operation, and civil engineering technology. While opportunities at Bath Iron Works are limited for most workers, placements are high at Bath Iron Works for welders and sheet metal workers graduating from the Vocational-Technical Institutes.

Wages offered to many Vocational-Technical Institute graduates, especially those in mechanical and technological occupations, are typically much higher than the minimum wage. Clerical and health service workers usually start with wages only slightly higher than minimum wage, but advancement is fairly rapid for well-trained workers.

### HIGH SCHOOLS

Maine's high schools are expected to graduate approximately 15,500 students in June 1981, the same number as in June 1980. Nearly 45 percent of the 1980 graduates went on to post-high school education, up from 43.4 percent of 1979 graduates. The percentage of 1981 graduating seniors who go on to higher education is expected to equal or exceed these rates. Between 5 and 10 percent of all graduates are expected to go into military service. This number is a slight increase over recent years, and may be attributable to increases in military pay and the lack of civilian job opportunities.

An estimated 7,800 high school graduates will be entering the job market this summer, and most will be facing a difficult job search. Many high school students





find permanent employment by keeping the part-time jobs they have held through the school year. These jobs are frequently in food stores and fast-food franchises. While employment in these firms may be temporary or less than full-time, graduates are unwilling to give them up because of the lack of other opportunities. Students with vocational training at the high school level have a better chance of obtaining a job, although preference is often given to graduates of the Vocational-Technical Institutes. Most high school graduates will receive wages at or slightly above the minimum wage level. Those who do not already have jobs will need to actively seek out work and prove that they are better qualified than the many other applicants for each position. Employment opportunities differ in various regions of the state.

Northeastern (Aroostook and Washington counties) - The number and type of jobs available in northeastern Maine for high school graduates is somewhat limited this year. The best job prospects are in retail trade and food stores. Occupations in these fields include cashier, stock clerk, secretary, bookkeeper, general office clerk and payroll clerk. Positions in wood harvesting and wood processing firms appear scarce, as the slowdown in construction has lessened demand for wood products workers. Limited employment may be available in trades occupations for those students with vocational training, as well as in food processing firms, banks, and on farms. Some students will find jobs in health services, either as support personnel (maintenance or clerical) or as nursing assistants.

North Central (Penobscot and Piscataquis counties) - Approximately 60 percent of high school graduates in the urban areas of north central Maine plan to attend some form of post-secondary educational institution. In the more remote areas, the percentage drops to 40 or 50 percent. Most of the students not going on to school or entering military service will need to find jobs. Those high school students in the southern area of Penobscot County who attended the regional vocational school may have more success in finding a job.

Business and secretarial students should be able to find jobs in the Greater Bangor area, although they will have to work hard to find them. Students with no specific skills, and without prior work experience, may find the job search quite difficult. Some jobs should be available in the shoe, paper, or textile mills. Graduates in the more rural northern areas of Penobscot and Piscataquis counties may find summer employment in wood harvesting or farming, or at camps near the Moosehead Lake or Baxter State Park region.

Coastal (Hancock, Lincoln, Knox, Sagadahoc, and Waldo counties) - Employment in the coastal areas of Maine is highly seasonal and dependent on the summer tourist season. Unemployment at other times of the year is often quite high. This year's high school graduates in the coastal areas of Maine have excellent prospects for finding summer employment. Permanent jobs may be much more difficult to find. However, some high school graduates may be able to retain their summer jobs in the fall, especially in restaurants, supermarkets, and retail stores.

Permanent employment opportunities should also be available in wood harvesting, food processing, fishing, and services industries. Graduates with vocational training may find work in the trades, although housing construction-related workers are still experiencing hard times. Bath Iron Works, one of the largest employers in the area, currently has a backlog of 14,000 applicants for jobs, and is not likely to hire many high school graduates. However, young people in the





immediate Bath area have a slight advantage, in that Bath Iron Works does try to hire local workers. The retail trade industry is also growing in the coastal area of Maine, and may provide some permanent jobs. As is true in any area of high unemployment, high school graduates in this area frequently elect to enter military service.

Central (Androscoggin and Kennebec counties) - Job prospects for high school graduates in central Maine appear to be concentrated in small private companies, hospitals, and factories. High school graduates with secretarial, business, or vocational skills have the best chance of finding a job. Many students without specific skills will find it necessary to receive further training from either a college or one of the Vocational-Technical Institutes.

Students who received health service training at their high school regional vocational centers should have easy access to jobs in hospitals and nursing homes. Demand is also strong for persons with entry-level office skills to work in professional and industrial offices, banks, and retail stores. Many of this year's graduates may find summer employment in the coastal Maine area. Often those students who find only summer employment decide to further their education or enter military service in the fall.

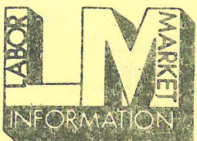
Southern (Cumberland and York counties) - The employment outlook for high school graduates is more promising in the southern Maine area, primarily because of the larger volume of industry in that area. As is true in other parts of the State, those graduates with vocational training should more easily find jobs. Students with secretarial, business, or computer training will also have a better chance of finding employment. Some jobs may be available at Pratt and Whitney, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Computervision, Sprague Electronics, Scott Paper, General Electric, and other manufacturing plants. Other positions should be available in fish processing plants and textile mills, as well as food stores, offices, restaurants, and fast-food franchises.

Summer employment in tourist-related industries should be plentiful. Students with full-time summer jobs may be able to extend them into the fall. Also, students who have held part-time jobs during the school year may be able to expand their hours after graduation.

Western (Franklin, Oxford, and Somerset counties) - Western Maine is characterized by manufacturing industries, wood harvesting, and high unemployment. Because the unemployment rate is high for unskilled workers, many high school graduates choose to further their education, or enter military service. Manufacturing industries such as Boise-Cascade, Bass Shoe, and International Paper frequently hire high school graduates with vocational skills, as well as some unskilled workers. Graduates with secretarial skills are also able to find work in many small businesses.

#### SUMMER EMPLOYMENT

Many opportunities should be available in tourist-related industries, such as hotels, restaurants, and various retail trade establishments. According to Maine Job Bank officials, openings at summer camps are being filled very quickly, a reversal of the trend in past years. Job Bank openings listed in early May in-





cluded waiter/waitress, cook, counterperson, secretary, bank teller, health service worker, nurse, cashier, and clerk.

The outlook does not appear promising for students who wish to find summer employment related to their field of study. Positions in business and government may be difficult to find. Government spending cutbacks, the high unemployment rate, and an uncertain economic future mean that students who wish to find a job relating to their career goals may not be able to do so.

Tourist-related industries are expected to provide many jobs this summer, especially in coastal communities. Officials from the Maine Restaurant Association and the Maine Publicity Bureau are predicting a summer season at least equal to and probably better than last year's very successful season. Mail inquiries and advance reservations are ahead of last year's.

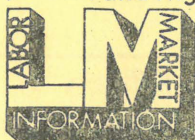
Summer jobs are available in coastal areas in restaurants, motels, campgrounds, gift shops, fast-food franchises, supermarkets, and retail stores. College students are often preferred by employers over high school students by virtue of their maturity and work experience. Restaurants tend to hire waiters and waitresses over the age of 20 if liquor is served. However, some employers, especially fast-food franchises, favor younger students in hopes that the employee will come back to work each summer for several years.

Many tourist industry representatives have cited a possible summer employment difficulty for students this year. Some Maine school systems, and some of the University of Maine campuses, have chosen to reconvene classes this year on August 31, one week before Labor Day. Students who desire jobs in the tourist industry, but who are unable to work Labor Day week and weekend, may well have difficulty being hired. High school graduates who can work into September, and those students who return to school after Labor Day, may have an advantage over other students who must return in August.

Positions in tourist-related industries, however, should not be thought of only as summer jobs, according to the Maine Innkeepers Association. The recent employment trend in the hotel and restaurant business is to hire more school-trained persons for permanent positions. Young persons who start out as waiters, waitresses, or cleaning staff might consider training in restaurant or hotel management, thus turning a summer job into a career.

Summer jobs not in tourist-related businesses may be more difficult to obtain, especially for younger people. In other private job sector establishments, employers are often faced with a labor surplus, and might prefer to hire an older unemployed person before a student. Young people with skills learned in vocational schools or with prior work experience should have the best chance of finding jobs in private firms. Many students are finding it necessary to keep the part-time job they have held through the school year, and hopefully expand it to full time.

Government-sponsored summer jobs are scarce this year, due in large part to budget cutbacks. The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) has not been cut for 1981, but its funding level will remain the same as 1980. Because of inflation, there will be 5 percent fewer participants in the SYEP program this year. Estimated 1981 participation is 3,690 young people in Maine. Cutbacks in other CETA program funding will mean greater competition this year for fewer positions.





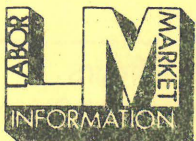
The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) will not be entirely funded this summer. The federally-funded portion of YCC, which normally employs 200 youth, will not operate this year. The Maine-sponsored portion, which relies on 20 percent federal money and has openings for 50 young people, has not yet received final funding. The Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC), for slightly older youth, will be in operation this summer employing approximately 40 workers. Normally a year-round employment program, YACC funds were cut this year, allowing the program to run in summertime only.

The State Government Internship Program will operate this year, employing 30 young participants in entry-level State government jobs. Wages paid to interns come from the department in which the participant works.

### SUMMARY

Permanent employment opportunities available to high school, college, and Vocational-Technical Institute graduates this year are mixed. Graduates with training in technical, business, vocational, or health service fields should be able to find jobs. Those graduates with less specific skills will likely find the job search difficult. However, many employers agree that attitude is as important as ability. Students desiring jobs must be willing to look for them and then prove their worth to an employer.

Summer jobs should not be as hard to find this year as in the past couple of years if young people are willing to work in tourist-related industries or summer camps. Other summer jobs, especially in government or business firms, may be difficult to find. Regions expected to have the best season and thus the most employment opportunities are those in the south and along the coast. Those regions furthest from population centers are expected to have a less auspicious season and fewer summer job opportunities.





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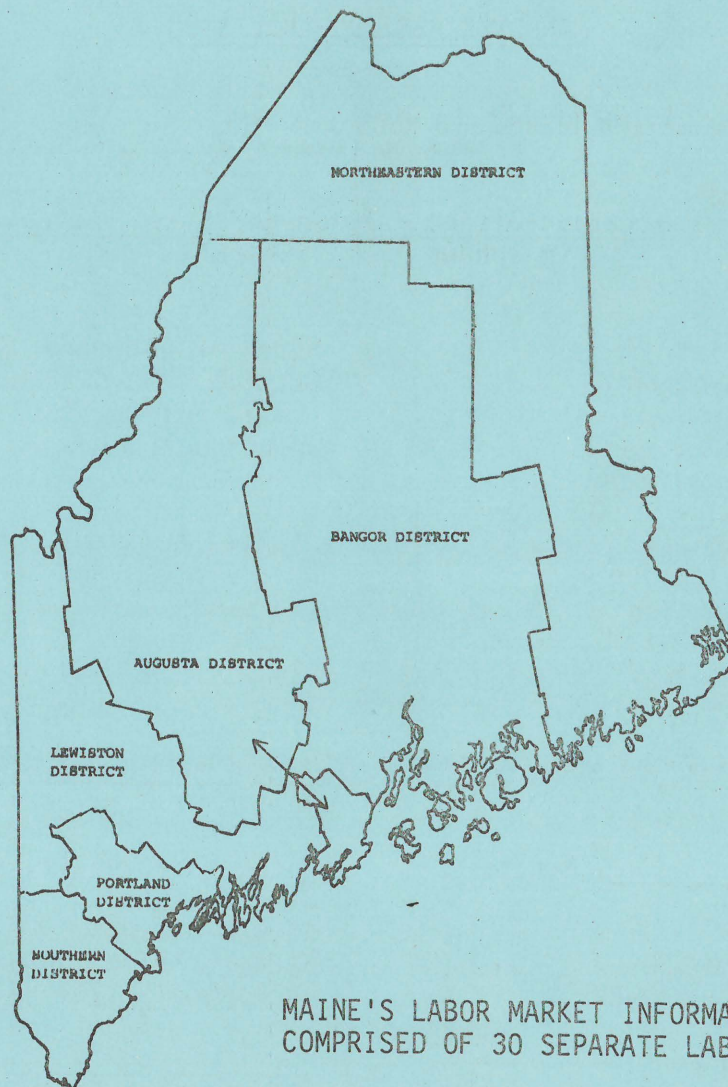
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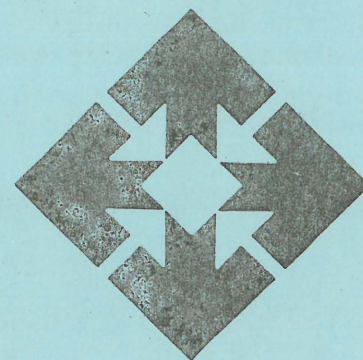




MAINE'S LABOR MARKET INFORMATION DISTRICTS,  
COMPRISED OF 30 SEPARATE LABOR MARKET AREAS.

The perceptual movement of the figure illustrates the two facets of research. Viewed one way, the four small arrows pointing to the central square represent the varied inputs to a research project.

Viewed another way, the four large arrows pointing outward represent the widespread dissemination of the results of research.



For further information regarding this report,  
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